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ABSTRACT

The March 2000 WEEA Digest contains two articles. The first, "Honoring Ways of Knowing" (A. Lin Goodwin) mentions that notions of "educational excellence" or "education for all" are too seldom actualized because such conversations often sidestep the reality of inequitable educational practices. Voluminous data exist that articulate how schools help to structure inequality. This digest begins with a brief summary of school experiences of children of color and girls in an effort to make known the ways that schools structure inequality and educators' (and society's) unrelenting low and limiting expectations for these students. The article discusses how authentic assessment can precipitate a shift away from knowledge as discrete and intelligence as static, and foster teachers' deeper understanding of children of color and girls' abilities, gifts, and ways of knowing. It argues that authentic assessment can result in transformative teaching that honors children's diversities and multiple ways of knowing and learning to nurture "all" their talents. The digest includes lists of WEEA resources on assessment; additional resources; and resource organizations for assessment. The second article entitled "Academic Accountability for Students with Disabilities and LEP" (Tim Boals) reports on how Wisconsin has developed an alternative assessment framework for special students. (BT)

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WEEA Equity Resource Center

Digest on Education Assessment

Honoring Ways of Knowing

By A. Lin Goodwin, Teachers College, Columbia University

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Notions of "educational excellence" or "education for all" are too seldom actualized because such conversations often sidestep the blatant reality of inequitable educational practices. Voluminous data exist that articulate how schools help to structure inequality, ensuring that all students, particularly those outside the power culture—students of color[1] and girls—are afforded limited or uneven access to learning opportunities.[2] Thus, despite the many positive changes that have occurred to support racial, gender, and class equality, middle-class white boys continue to outstrip girls and children of color in terms of achievement, access to resources, vocational choice, and life options.

Some theories about interrupting this persistent trend have emphasized the disjuncture between the dominant paradigm that frames schooling and the multiplicities demonstrated by diverse learners.[3] Schools conform to and perpetuate narrow conceptions and measurements of intelligence, knowing, and success, views that invariably find children of color and girls wanting.[4] One cannot help but wonder what would happen were we to change both the way we teach and how we assess what children know. What might this mean for the educational attainment of those children who are served least well by schools?

This article begins with a brief summary of the school experiences of children of color and girls in an effort to bring to the surface the ways in which schools structure inequality and educators' (and society's) unrelenting low and limiting expectations for these students. It then discusses how authentic assessment can precipitate a shift away from knowledge as discrete and intelligence as static, and foster teachers' deeper understanding of children of color and girls' abilities, gifts, and ways of knowing. In the article, I argue that authentic assessment can result in transformative teaching that honors children's diversities and multiple ways of knowing and learning, and nurtures *all* their talents.

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Variability in School Experiences

This section begins with a basic assumption: that each of us is multiply identified. Any discussion that attempts to separate race from gender, from class, from language, from heritage, and so on, is inherently faulty; we each are shaped by our cultures, see the world through our experiences, and are culturally complex. While I do acknowledge that children's experiences in schools cannot be simplistically framed by any individual cultural characteristic, my review nonetheless relies upon a body of literature that sometimes accentuates one aspect of identity over or to the exclusion of others. My discussion is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather is designed to highlight some of the different ways in which children of color and girls encounter school. In it, I draw on two informative reviews[5] of the differential school experiences in relation to gender and race conducted by Carter and Goodwin (1994) and Grossman and Grossman (1994).

Teaching and learning are reciprocal and cyclical actions that occur primarily through the interactions that students and teachers have with one another. It is often the quality of these interactions that determines the quality of one's educational experience. Studies have shown that a qualitative difference exists in the interactions teachers have with children of color and with girls. Girls are less likely to be praised, called upon, or given positive feedback than their male classmates. Teachers are more likely

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Ways of Knowing . . . continued

Textbooks and teaching materials continue to pay scant attention to the experiences of women and people of color.

to afford boys additional response time and instructional assistance, to integrate their ideas into classroom discussions, and to offer them encouragement. African American and Latino children, especially boys, receive more criticism and punishment and are more likely to be suspended from school than European American students. It has been found that teachers respond more negatively to African American high-achieving girls than European American girls (who also receive less positive attention than European American boys, high-achieving or otherwise) and tend to encourage—and reward—social skills versus academic behavior on the part of African American girls. When one examines the literature on teachers' interactions with their students, an implicit hierarchy emerges. It appears that European American boys benefit from the most favorable teacher interactions, followed by European American girls, then girls of color, particularly African American girls, with African American and Latino boys receiving the least positive teacher attention.

Differences in curricula also affect opportunities to learn. Textbooks and teaching materials continue to pay scant attention to the experiences of women and people of color. Textbook exemplars used to illustrate concepts and topics continue to portray males and whites more frequently and more advantageously than females and individuals of color. Additionally, evidence indicates that girls are more likely to be encouraged to pursue "soft" sciences such as biology over high-status subjects such as physics and engineering, and that boys are more likely than girls and children of color to be steered toward math- and science-related courses. Research has also found that children perceived as "disadvantaged" are more likely to be fed a steady diet of low-level, skill-based work—such as basic computation in mathematics and decoding in reading—and relegated to cognitively undemanding academic tasks. In fact, children of color are disproportionately assigned to the lowest academic tracks, special education, and the lowest-ability groups, where they are often exposed to curricula that are simplified, reduced, and watered down.

Teachers' differential treatment of children of color and girls has been linked to the low and limited expectations teachers have for them. Teachers perceive girls to be less academically capable than boys, yet view girls of color as less able than white girls, and boys of color as less able than girls of color. Again, the implicit hierarchy mentioned earlier becomes visible. It seems that educators have unknowingly absorbed the racist ideology that permeates American institutions, regulations, structures, and society, and diminishes people of color and women. This racist ideology is socially and purposefully constructed and maintained, to the extent that educators come to accept differential achievement as the norm and so behave in ways that uphold this norm. Interrupting this mindset and its damaging consequences requires conscious action and a deliberate change in the way classroom business is conducted.

Coming to Know Ways of Knowing

Numerous investigations have sought to discern the mediating influence of race and culture on children's ways of knowing and sense-making styles.[6] For example, Huber and Pewewardy (1990) conducted an extensive review of research examining cultural cognitive styles that concluded with the notion that different racial and ethnic groups display numerous cognitive, learning-style, interactional, and communicative preferences.[7] Researchers and scholars have theorized that the differential school experiences and academic achievement of children of color may be attributed to a mismatch between the culture of the school and the home cultures of pupils. This concept has been variously described as "bicultural ambivalence,"[8] "cultural discontinuity or incongruence,"[9] and an absence of "cultural synchronization."[10] These theories raise the possibility that culturally and linguistically diverse children may learn in culture-specific ways and require instruction that capitalizes on their learning styles and strengths, rather than emphasizing their "deficits." These theories also suggest that

> *the manner in which children of color receive, manipulate, transform, and express knowledge, as well as their task and modality preferences and the ways in which they interact and communicate with others, may not be well explained by mainstream learning theory traditionally grounded in white children's ways of knowing.*[11]

The growing body of evidence that supports the idea of culturally grounded learning,

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WEEA Resources on Assessment

Expectations and beliefs in children's potential to learn play a major role in assessment and outcomes. These resources, selected from our extensive collection, can help improve classroom systems, interactions, and outcomes for all students. They offer opportunities to infuse the experiences and perspectives of different groups of students and their families into the existing curriculum and to infuse equity concepts into all levels of school operation.

A-Gay-Yah

An exciting, multicultural social studies or history curriculum for grades 6 to 12, *A-Gay-Yah* emphasizes critical thinking and cooperative learning, increases gender equity and cultural awareness, and uses the context of American Indian history and culture to examine gender roles.•By Wathene Young (178 pp.) 1992••#2735•$30.00

Add-Ventures for Girls

Building Math Confidence

Developed with and field-tested by classroom teachers, this collection of fun, hands-on activities address teacher-student interaction patters, girls' learning styles, and the importance of parent involvement to help teachers create an environment that engages elementary and middle school girls in math.•By Dr. Margaret Franklin
Elementary (292 pp.)••#2709•$39.00
Middle School (347 pp.)••#2710•$42.00

Checklists for Counteracting Race and Sex Bias in Educational Materials

For more than 15 years, this easy-to-use handbook has helped educators and families evaluate materials for gender and race bias, a first step to improving instructional materials.•By Martha P. Cotera (43 pp.) 1982••#2042•$6.00

Going Places

An Enrichment Program to Empower Students

Dropout prevention that focuses on empowering students to be engaged learners can make the difference, as shown by this model, developed and field-tested by San Diego Schools. Outlining a flexible 18-week curriculum targeting middle and high school students most at risk, *Going Places* focuses on enrichment and hands-on, cooperative learning; develops and builds self-esteem; improves problem-solving and decision-making skills; and develops leadership skills.•By San Diego City Schools (433 pp.) 1991••#2713•$50.00

Raising the Grade

A Title IX Curriculum

The latest release from the WEEA Equity Resource Center, for K–12 classrooms, after-school programs, and community groups. Building an effective classroom for all girls and boys is the first step toward increasing student achievement. Move toward the Improving America's Schools Act goals, and help your students celebrate 25 years of growing gender equity in education. *Raising the Grade* is a collection of fun and interesting activities that will strengthen sixth through twelfth graders' abilities to work together effectively across the diversity of gender, race, national origin, and disability. Designed to be used throughout the learning period, on its own, as part of a thematic unit, or across the curriculum, *Raising the Grade* will help students recognize that they can take action to make gender equity a reality in all areas of their lives.•By the WEEA Equity Resource Center (174 pp.) 1998••#2810•$17.00

Practical Tools and Support for Gender-Fair Learning

The WEEA Equity Resource Center at EDC can help you find the tools you need to create gender-fair multicultural learning environments.

Call the Center's hotline at **800-225-3088** or **TTY 800-354-6798** for resources and referrals.

The Center's website is full of exciting information and tools, from fun facts about the history of equality to a list of practical curricula designed to help make any subject gender-fair. The Center's website was designed to be accessible to users with disabilities.

www.edc.org/WomensEquity

EDEQUITY (the Educational Equity Discussion List) is designed to encourage discussion about international theory and practice. To subscribe, send e-mail to <Majordomo@mail.edc.org>. The subject should be left blank and the body of the message should read:

subscribe edequity

To order WEEA materials call our distribution center at 800-793-5076.

A Road Well Traveled

Three Generations of Cuban American Women

Through stories and family photos, 12 Cuban women offer readers a view of their experiences, strengths, and achievements. The first anthology of its kind, it is the perfect tool to build understanding and respect. Useful for high school and college courses.•By Terry Doran, Janet Satterfield, and Chris Stade (162 pp.) 1988••#2683•$21.00

Sisters in the Blood

The Education of Women in Native America

This landmark book examines the educational situation, in all its intricacies, for American Indian girls and women. Based on interviews with nearly 1,000 women, it places the experience of American Indian women in the larger context of U.S. education, looks at the origins of racism and stereotyping, explores possible solutions to the critical dropout problem, and offers recommendations to policymakers and educators. *Sisters* is of critical importance to improving education for both American Indian and all students. A must for anyone committed to making schools work for all students.•By Dr. Ardy Clarke (354 pp.) 1993••#2743•$23.50

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Ways of Knowing . . . continued

also offers insight into girls' ways of knowing.[11] This literature suggests that girls respond more positively to classroom environments that encourage cooperation and collaboration over the competition, individualism, and objectivity that more typically define classroom culture. Research into girls' sense of fairness and morality posits that girls are more likely to be sensitive to the needs of others, while other studies have indicated that girls are more likely to respond to adults and to seek out interactions with them. The idea of "field sensitivity" has also been associated with females and with children of color,[13] and translates into a learning style that is responsive to modeling, group work, and personal connections with content.

Because authentic assessment is continuous, it is integral to as opposed to divorced from instruction; teaching and assessment become seamless, simultaneous processes.

Ways of knowing notwithstanding, teachers would be unwise to rush to categorize children according to learning-style preference or to use these theories as rigid indicators of how culturally diverse children learn, because much of what we know remains inconclusive and untested.[14] Rather, the lesson teachers can and should take from this body of literature is the idea that children *do* learn and perceive the world in dissimilar ways. Therefore, meeting the instructional and personal needs of diverse learners demands that teachers create more inclusive classroom cultures that embrace multiple ways of knowing. When children are not forced to "enter school having to unlearn or, at least, to modify their own culturally sanctioned interactional and behavioral styles and adopt those styles rewarded in the school context if they wish to achieve academic success,"[15] they are allowed to apply all of themselves to the educational enterprise, to bring all that they know to learning. Authentic assessment, when viewed as a way of coming to know what a person thinks, feels, knows, and is able to do, can be used as a mechanism for revealing children and uncovering their capacities.

Authentic assessments[16] are often described as more meaningful and comprehensive measures of what learners know and are able to do. Unlike standardized tests that are efficient, norm-referenced instruments that separate learning from testing and require learners to produce distinct and correct answers on cue,[17] authentic assessments are characterized by continuous observations of learning, depth and breadth of response, cycles of revision and refinement, students' engagement in self-assessment, and connections between what is being assessed and real-world issues and questions.[18] Standardized testing has a long history of disadvantaging girls and youngsters who are poor or are members of visible racial/ethnic groups.[19] Thus, there is a great deal of optimistic anticipation, even in the face of scant evidence, that assessments that represent alternatives to traditional multiple-choice testing can bring about more equitable educational outcomes for girls and children of color[20] because they enable teachers to tailor instruction to learners and truly meet their needs.

Authentic Assessment as a Journey toward Transformative Teaching

Two basic assumptions underlie this discussion about authentic assessment. First, assessment is authentic when it is continuous, cyclical, and embedded in the classroom curriculum. Second, because authentic assessment is continuous, it is integral to as opposed to divorced from instruction; teaching and assessment become seamless, simultaneous processes. Rather than an event such as testing, which happens at the conclusion of instruction apart from the curriculum, authentic assessment is an ongoing process that supports and informs teaching *and* learning. Authentic assessments engage students in problem-solving and problem posing; are grounded in meaningful, "real-life" tasks; provide multiple forms of evidence about student learning; offer students numerous opportunities for self-reflection and revision; present varied paths to learning by encouraging the utilization of many modalities and strategies; support children's best work by rendering criteria and standards explicit; allow children to make connections between home and school and to integrate different subject areas or concepts; emphasize growth and development over time; and value the learning process as well as the product.[21] Authentic assessments require that teachers change the way they think about knowledge, instruction, and academic success, because achievement is no longer defined as getting the single right answer, doing things in a certain way, delivering isolated facts, or demonstrating particular competencies on demand.

5 *Continued p. 6, "Ways of Knowing"*

Additional Resources

Achieving Gender Equity
Strategies for the Classroom

This book offers strategies teachers can use to modify their own classroom teaching, as well as tips for parents. Among the topics addressed, the concept of self-assessment is introduced as a key challenge for women and girls; practical approaches are included as well.•Dianne D. Horgan (1995). Allyn and Bacon, 160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02194•800-666-9433•ISBN: 020515459X•
Web: **vig.abacon.com**

ASSESS (Assessing Sex Equity in Schools and Society)

A useful handbook of checklists, surveys, and questionnaires designed to help evaluate equity within schools.•Michigan Center for Career and Technical Education, 230 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824•800-292-1606.

Assessment Alternatives for Diverse Classrooms

This volume takes a comprehensive look at assessment in the classroom as it affects students of color, women and girls, students with disabilities, and students of varied socioeconomic classes. Beginning with a brief history of assessment from the inception of IQ testing, this book outlines the bias inherent in the assessment process and practical approaches toward making evaluation more accessible for all students.•Edited by Beverly P. Farr and Elise Trumbull (1997). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers•ISBN: 092684251X.

Assessment for Equity and Inclusion
Embracing All Our Children

A collection of essays on the importance of equity in assessment, including case studies, examples, and strategies for implementing authentic assessment in the classroom.•Edited by A. Lin Goodwin (1997). Routledge, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001•800-634-7064•Web: **www.routledge-ny.com**

Assessment Standards for School Mathematics

Guide for examining current assessment practices and planning new assessment systems. Shows how to assess student performance by using new approaches to determine students' progress and achievement of goals. Presents six assessment standards that address mathematics, learning, equity, openness, inferences, and coherence.•National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1906 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191-1593•800-235-7566•ISBN: 0873534190•Web: **www.nctm.org**

Enriching Content Classes for Secondary ESOL Students

A practical handbook for designing, adapting, and implementing appropriate curricula and authentic assessment for English-language learners, this book includes checklists, student activities, and classroom ideas that can be applied directly and easily.•Judith H. Jameson (1998). Center for Applied Linguistics, Sunbelt Office and Delta Systems Co., Inc., McHenry, IL•ISBN: 1887744142•Web: **delta.kksbb.com**

New Standards Reference Examinations

Representing a new and exciting way to measure student achievement, performance standards indicate what students should be able to do at different points in their educational careers. After establishing performance standards, educators design an assessment to determine how well students have learned the tasks, concepts, and skills described by those standards. The *New Standards Reference Examinations* system includes reference examinations in mathematics and English language arts. Includes a mix of traditional tests and performance tasks that ask students to use their knowledge to solve complex problems. Spanish version is available for the mathematics component.•Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement•800-211-8378•
Web: **www.hbem.com**

Performance-Based Student Assessment
Challenges and Possibilities

This is Part 1 of the *95th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. This collection of essays discusses the need to accurately assess students' abilities while allowing for differences in what students know and how they learn. Addresses the intellectual, technical, and political issues of reforming education assessment to accommodate today's diverse classrooms. The essays include insight gained in several pilot-tested assessment systems, as well as designs for new systems to assess aptitude and achievement.•Edited by Joan Boykoff Baron and Dennie Palmer Wolf (1996). The University of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis, Chicago, IL 60637•773-702-7700•ISBN: 0226038033•Web: **www.press.uchicago.edu**

Sex Equity in Educational Opportunity, Achievement, and Testing
Proceedings of the 1991 ETS Invitational Conference

Excerpts of presentations given at the 1991 ETS Proceedings on measurement and evaluation. Features commentaries by national equity leaders on a wide range of topics in standardized assessment, from gender gaps in verbal and mathematics ability to the school and career experiences.•Educational Testing Service (1992), Rosedale Road, Princeton, NJ 08541•609-921-9000•e-mail: etsinfo@ets.org•ISBN: 0886851289•Web: **www.ets.org**

TIMSS
Third International Mathematics and Science Study

The largest study of comparative educational achievement ever undertaken, the TIMSS study compares mathematics and science achievement of students in 41 countries at five grade levels—the third, fourth, seventh, eighth grades, and final year of secondary school. Includes charts and comparisons by gender. Housed at Boston College, all reports are available free on-line.•TIMSS International Study Center (1993-99), Champion Hall 323, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167•Web: **www.csteep.bc.edu/timss**

Ways of Knowing . . . continued

When teachers learn to see children differently—as able and willing to learn—their teaching is transformed.

Assessment that is authentic looks carefully at children in order to come to know them, their needs, and their dreams. Observing and assessing students closely give teachers the precious cues and clues they need to create learning environments that invite all learners in and allow them to build their senses of themselves as powerful, capable, and cared-for human beings. When teachers strive to learn as much about students as possible and provide students with multiple entry points to learning, they define their role as providing the supports and structures necessary to help children see themselves as learners who are in control of the learning process. Much has been written about different kinds of authentic assessments—portfolios, performances, demonstrations, exhibitions. These are all worthwhile activities that enable students to reveal what they know in numerous ways. However, in the absence of deep knowledge of students, these activities will be hollow. Thus, what is most critical for teachers to understand when working with children in general, and diverse learners in particular, is that "assessment is an attitude before it is a method."[22] Authentic assessment begins with teachers making it their business to purposefully watch, listen to, talk with, and think about the children in their classrooms. By observing, recording, informally monitoring, conferencing with, and interviewing their students, teachers initiate an ongoing process that uncovers who learners are and what they know, and leads to opportunities for teachers and children to build shared meaning and beliefs. But it is more than simply gathering data about children; it is allowing children to get inside you so that you can never look at them in ways other than the most caring and positive.

When children's capacities are uncovered and they are revealed to be multifaceted learners, teachers' conceptions of them are naturally challenged. When teachers learn to see children differently—as able and willing to learn—their teaching is transformed. Stories of teaching transformations reveal the power of teachers' expectations and assumptions and how firmly entrenched is the sorting and classifying function of schools. Steve Ellwood began his teaching career as a "technician" who saw tracking as "normative and sensible" and defined his "role in assessment [as] grounded in the practical need to assign a grade for each student in math and science."[23] As his conception of assessment began to change from "a labeling and sorting tool" to "a starting point for working with students," he began to teach differently to students he now perceived differently. He started to group students heterogeneously, to encourage students to work together, to see knowledge as complex rather than discreet and sequential. By defining "assessment as empowerment: sketches of progress to build upon,"[24] he and his students challenged the prevailing norm in his school—that students from poor and working class-neighborhoods seldom made it into the elite subjects, specifically algebra, that serve as gatekeepers for college entry.

When Julie Savitch and Leslie Serling decided to team-teach their two respective classes—one designated "gifted," the other "regular"—little did they realize that their conceptions of giftedness would be dramatically altered. Informed by Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence,[25] they began to understand "that education is not merely to sort out a few children and make them the leaders, but to develop the latent talents of the entire population in diverse ways."[26] As their "lens for assessment assumed a broader view," they were guided "to see and think about students' growth in different ways."[27] Employing cooperative groups, thematic curricula, long-term projects, a variety of instructional strategies, and authentic assessments such as portfolios, Savitch and Sterling invited every student into the learning process and "created a new definition of giftedness—one that includes everybody."[28] As a consequence of coming to know their students' gifts, all their students experienced success, including the many children who were from immigrant families and spoke a language other than English, who had previously been categorized as "nongifted."

Paula "grew up with great misconceptions concerning what mathematics was about and what it meant to be good at math."[29] Despite her success in mathematics, she "never felt [she] had the right to call [herself] a math star," a label she felt was reserved for those who scored "not high, but highest, on tests."[30] As a teacher of mathematics who understood "that the number of Americans who enjoy math and feel they

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do it well is alarmingly small, and that the preponderance of those are not women and minorities,"[31] she sought to build children's understanding and enjoyment of mathematics. Rather than thinking of math as close-ended and objective, she emphasized imagination, personal relevance, and patterns; came to see math as "more art than arithmetic"; and worked "to subordinate teaching to learning."[32] For Paula, "assessment was almost indistinguishable from practice" and "at report card time [she] sent home narratives describing how each child worked, what her style was, what strengths she relied on."[33] In her story, she defines assessment in mathematics as enabling children to think and do through building and concrete demonstrations; imagining and extrapolating from actual to imagined situations; writing creatively in order to encourage children to both reflect on their learning and generate knowledge; and sharing—talking together about mathematics. She advises other teachers, particularly those who aim to teach math

> *to be ready to plan and assess mathematical activity not through the demands of a standardized test but by looking at what children actually do when they think about math and what they say about what they do. By honoring in their teaching and their assessing, the multiplicity of ways that children talk and think and explain their math, teachers will be rehumanizing the discipline.*[34]

A Final Word on Authentic Assessment

These portraits of practice enable us to see that teachers who engage in authentic assessment believe that different ways of knowing are nurtured and supported by diverse methodologies, a wide range of activities, differentiated instruction, deep caring for the uniqueness of each child, and the creation of an inviting classroom family.[35] Each of the teachers previously introduced assumes that children possess much knowledge; each sees the purpose of instruction and assessment as first supporting learners to reveal what they know and then guiding them to compare, relate, or apply what they know to new information and experiences; and each is determined to educate every child. Each works to enable his or her students to demonstrate knowing in a variety of ways and resists relying unduly on single modes of expression to the exclusion of other means. Through their experiences, we see that authentic assessment is dependent upon a deep belief in children's inherent capacity to learn and achieve academic success, and a strong obligation to ensure educational equity for and access to all children—girls and boys, poor children, children of color.

If schools and educators subscribe to deficit views of children and their families and attribute learners' shortcomings to gender, race, or class, they fail to be accountable for the academic progress and development of all children. Much has been written about teacher expectations and the detrimental effect that low or inappropriate expectations can have on student achievement.[36] Indeed, a growing body of literature describes the relationship between teacher beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, and preconceptions and teacher behavior.[37] This literature tells us that teachers' belief in children's potential to learn and worthiness has a bearing on the quality of instruction children receive. Authentic assessment and practice are possible only when teachers believe that children who are culturally and linguistically diverse can and must learn, and are fully capable and will benefit from instruction that is meaningful and rich with powerful ideas. Too often, children are blamed for their own failures or locked into teachers' assumptions about what they can and cannot accomplish. Teachers can and will find many convenient reasons for children's lack of success unless they look closely and critically at themselves, scrutinize their own practices, and abide by the assumption that if children are not learning, then the teachers are the ones who must do something differently. This is not easy and requires "a very special kind of listening, listening that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs."[38] ✦

Teachers who engage in authentic assessment believe that different ways of knowing are nurtured and supported by diverse methodologies, a wide range of activities, differentiated instruction, deep caring for the uniqueness of each child, and the creation of an inviting classroom family.

Notes

1. In this article, I use the term *of color* to denote those individuals who are African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American, or who are not of European American descent, even while I acknowledge that all human beings are, in actuality, people of color.
2. See for example, American Association of University Women (AAUW), *How Schools Shortchange Girls*. (Washington, DC: American Association of University Women and National Education Association, 1992). College

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Resource Organizations for Assessment

The College Board
45 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10023-6992
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Web: **www.collegeboard.org**

Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-408-5505
Web: **www.ccsso.org**

Educational Testing Service
Rosedale Road
Princeton, NJ 08541 USA
Phone: 609-921-9000
E-mail: etsinfo@ets.org
Web: **www.ets.org**

ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation
1131 Shriver Laboratory (Bldg 075)
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
Phone: 301-405-7449 or 800-464-3742
E-mail: feedback@ericae.net
Web: **www.ericae.net**

Learning Through Evaluation, Adaptation, and Dissemination (LEAD) Center
1402 University Ave.
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-265-5943
E-mail: lead@engr.wisc.edu
Web: **www.cae.wisc.edu/~lead**

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest)
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: 617-864-4810
E-mail: info@fairtest.org
Web: **www.fairtest.org**

National Center for Improving Student Learning and Achievement in Mathematics and Science
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1025 W. Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-3605
Web: **www.wcer.wisc.edu/ncisla**

National Center for Research and Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing
UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation
CSE/CRESST
301 GSE&IS Mailbox 951522
Los Angeles, CA 90095
Phone: 310-206-1532
Web: **www.cse.ucla.edu**

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Assessment and Evaluation Program
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 503-275-9500
Web: **www.nwrel.org/eval**

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Academic Accountability . . continued

ability for academic progress while meeting individual student needs. The question for states and localities then becomes, *What alternate assessments are appropriate and how are we to develop them in ways that meet the enormous diversity represented within these two special-needs populations?* Every state in the nation must address this issue by July 2000, when the federal reporting requirements take effect. The approaches we see may be almost as varied as the number of states in the Union. Wisconsin's answer is a complex response that attempts to meet the spirit of the legislation, the needs of these students, and the tradition of local control and autonomy that is carefully guarded in this Midwest state.

Every state in the nation must address this issue by July 2000, when the federal reporting requirements take effect.

Creating a Framework

The key component of Wisconsin's approach is the state's framework for classroom-based, alternative assessment for students who cannot meaningfully participate, even with allowable accommodations, in the regular assessment program. The framework is aligned with Wisconsin's model academic standards, which describe what students should know and be able to do by grades 4, 8, and 12. These standards include broad content objectives followed by several more focused performance benchmarks for progress in the four academic subject areas of social studies, language arts, math, and science. To create the framework, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction called together educators from around the state to the capital, Madison, in summer 1998 to develop *Alternate Performance Indicators* (APIs). APIs are observable, measurable indicators of progress toward meeting particular content and performance standards. The APIs assist teachers who work with students with disabilities or LEP in accessing the state's academic standards by providing examples of concrete progress indicators and practical assessment activities.

The educators who developed APIs were first grouped separately by their specialty of working with either students with disabilities or LEP. Once in these groups, the teams were further divided into the four academic content areas. Their charge was to consider the special needs of the students they taught while reviewing each performance standard, writing between one and three APIs for each performance standard. They then wrote one or two sample performance activities to give teachers ideas of how to structure classroom assessments directed toward the APIs. The groups used an organizational chart with four columns under each content standard. The left-hand column listed the corresponding performance standards, followed by a column for the draft APIs, then the sample draft activities/tasks, and finally a blank column that provides teachers with space to document their sources of assessment data (e.g., work samples, direct observation, review of records, tests).[4] To accompany the APIs, alternative assessment guidebooks detailing their appropriate use were developed. The guidebook for teachers of students with LEP demonstrates how to design and use APIs, including numerous examples of how to implement performance-based classroom assessments. It also assists educators in creating assessment rubrics, interpreting data, measuring gains over time, and reporting results at the local level. The guidebook for teachers of students with disabilities includes extensive information on using testing accommodations. Both guidebooks will be used as the foundational texts in professional development sessions that have already begun in Wisconsin.

The guidebooks also provide suggestions for how schools can report student progress in alternative assessment locally to parents and the community. Students taking alternative assessment are included in statewide reports, along with students participating in standardized assessments. In this way, all students with disabilities and LEP "count" in building performance reports and thus cannot "disappear" from the accountability equation. While the expectation for students with LEP is that alternative assessment is a temporary need while English skills develop, students with severe disabilities may participate in alternative assessment as long as the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Committee deems such participation appropriate.[5]

Advantages of the Alternative Assessment Framework

A standards-based, alternative assessment framework assists teachers in planning lessons and assessments aligned with the same high

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standards other students must meet. This alignment between standards-based curricula, instruction, and assessment is particularly important for a group of students who have often been denied access to quality academic content. In this sense, the APIs serve as much as a curriculum and instructional planning guide as they do an assessment framework. APIs promote multiple ways of assessing LEP student performance that are authentic and take place over time. This is congruent with the best-practice recommendations for the assessment of special-needs students.[6] Content validity is high with APIs, as they are directly linked to the same academic standards other students are learning. Few if any high stakes (e.g., retention-in-grade, graduation) are attached to performance on APIs, and so the issue of negative consequences from the test is less a concern.[7]

Teachers within academic support programs have traditionally experienced difficulty in moving beyond separate, remedial curricula. APIs offer teachers of students with disabilities and LEP a local framework within which they are encouraged to align their curricula, instruction, and assessment with challenging content and performance standards from the very beginning. This should enable support programs to accelerate the rate at which these students close the academic gap.

While I would not want to give the impression that the alternative assessment framework will resolve all the difficulties inherent in teaching such a diverse group of students, it is a significant step forward. With the development of a standards-based, alternative assessment system, local schools now have a tool for curriculum alignment and a continuum of assessment options within which to include all students, even those with minimal English proficiency or cognitive disabilities. This continuum moves from full participation in large-scale assessment, through participation with varying testing accommodations, to, for a small percentage of eligible students, participation in classroom-based, standards-referenced alternative assessments. Wisconsin can now say that *all* students are included and that *all* students count. ✦

Notes

1. While many prefer to call these students English-language learners, I use students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as this is still the term used in federal and state legislation.
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3. Examples of commonly used testing accommodations include taking the test with additional time, in separate testing locations, with additional breaks, with dictionaries or other educational aids, and in large-print or Braille editions.
4. API Taskforce (in press), *Alternate Performance Indicators for Limited English Proficient Students*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Also, sample in Assessment section of **www.edc.org/WomensEquity**.
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Wisconsin can now say that all students are included and that all students count.

Academic Accountability for Students with Disabilities and LEP

By Tim Boals, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

The very students most in need of accountability and educational reforms are often left out.

Traditionally, many students with disabilities and LEP have been excluded from large-scale academic assessments on the grounds that those assessments were inappropriate and thus inequitable. While many researchers and practitioners still voice concerns about overreliance on these assessments, increasingly educators have come to believe that exclusion from large-scale assessments has more drawbacks than benefits. Since, for better or worse, large-scale assessments constitute a central piece of school accountability, the very students most in need of accountability and educational reforms are often left out of the equation if they are not assessed for academic progress.[2] Recent federal legislation, the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended in 1997, sought to address this issue by requiring states and localities to include *all* students in state and local reporting of academic assessment results. In this new era of increased accountability, all students, and the schools and programs that serve them, must meet clearly defined, standards-referenced criteria for learning.

Under IASA and IDEA, it is no longer sufficient to report that a child was exempted from academic assessments. Nonetheless, the legislation also recognizes that, for a small percentage of students with disabilities or LEP, large-scale assessments, even with testing accommodations,[3] will not provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. The legislation states that for these students, alternate assessments must be developed and implemented to provide the required account-

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WEEA is the Women's Educational Equity Act: federal legislation to promote educational equity for girls and women.

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